RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

October, 1990

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

MEETING MINUTES

The September meeting of RNA was conducted by the Vice Chairman Hank Cesari. The main topic for the evening was the proposed opening of a tile and marble cutting shop at 210 Ogden Ave. Mr. Rodriguez, who wants to buy the property, must obtain a variance from the City before legally locating his business at the Ogden Avenue address. While much of the tile work is done at the construction locations, it would be necessary for the storage and the cutting of special tiles to be done on the premises. Neighbors, especially those who reside close to the property, are very concerned about the traffic congestion on the street when oversized vehicles will have to make daily deliveries, the breaking of a strictly R-2 residential zone for an industrial use variance and the noise level of the stone cutting.

We also had an update on Riverview Park's proposed renovation. The City had postponed the initial Planning Board meeting till October 2nd, at which time the proposal will be officially presented to the public for comments and alternatives.

Some other issues discussed were the RNA bus trip to Atlantic City, the re-opening of Mountain Road, the continued poor performance of our local Post Office; and the NJ Transit's proposal for a commuter busway to aid commuters to reach New York and linking the waterfront office projects.

Members voted to invite a representative of the Police Department to our next meeting to discuss our deteriorating crime situation. They also voted to change the night of our regular monthly meeting from the second Tuesday to the second Friday of each month.

The meeting closed with our 50/50 drawing, won by Ted Conrad, and the sharing of refreshments provided by our members.

Please join us next month on Friday, October 12th, at the Harborview Health Care Center when we will discuss plans for our Annual Harborview Party (tentatively scheduled for the first week in December) and other social events for the Holidays.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:
CHANGE OF RNA MEETING DAY

The RNA members have voted to change the day of our monthly meeting from Tuesday to Friday. Beginning in October, our meeting will be the second Friday of each month at Harborview at 7:30 p.m. See you Friday, October 12th!

LETTER FROM A CONCERNED NEIGHBOR:

After attending the last meeting, and hearing the pro's and con's (mostly con's) of the stone cutting business attempting to locate at 210 Ogden Avenue, I decided to try and find out some facts about the variance from Tony Lambiase, our zoning officer.

Tony advised me that no business could take place at 210 until a variance was granted, and indeed that no trucks could even be parked there until that time. And that to do otherwise, would be against the law. I told Tony that business was going on and that trucks were "coming and going". Tony went to 210 on two different occasions and agreed that business was being transacted. He advised the seller's lawyer as to this fact.

On Wednesday, September 19th, I was leaving for work at

COMING EVENTS

1) RNA MEETING:
FRIDAY, October 12th, at 7:30 PM
AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER
GUEST SPEAKER: DIRECTOR OF POLICE: GERARD MCCARTHY

2) ANNUAL FOOD AND TOY DRIVE:
October 12th meeting: **FOOD COLLECTION**
November 9th meeting: **TOYS COLLECTION**

3) RNA BUS TRIP TO ATLANTIC CITY
Sunday, November 4th, departing 8:30 AM

(continued from page one)

8:40 a.m. when I saw Mr. Rodriguez (who attended the last meeting and is the prospective purchaser) back his large flatbed truck out of the garage. I walked over to him and politely asked him if he knew that it was against the law to transact or conduct business at 210 before he received a variance. Mr. Rodriguez told me "he would do anything he wanted at any time he wanted at 210 Ogden and that I should go f--- myself". He reiterated his insulting comment and told me to get out of the way. He then proceeded to gas the truck and back up at a speed that would have killed or injured any child who was playing at the curb on the other side of Ogden Ave. He then drove away. I called Tony Lambiase and told him what Mr. Rodriguez said. Tony stated that he was issuing a violation to the seller because he (Tony) knew that they (the prospective purchasers) were transacting business at 210.

It is imperative that we do not allow 210 to be given a variance. We are a residential neighborhood and we must stay that way. The past is gone and we want only residential-best for Ogden Avenue for the present and the future. We must fight this variance and win!!

Marie Lannie

Update: Proposed Marble-cutting Shop at 210 Ogden Avenue

Discussions regarding the proposed location of a marble cutting and storage facility at 210 Ogden Ave. continued at the official RNA meeting on September 11. Attending the meeting were the owner of the property, Joseph Mizzi, of Plainsboro, New Jersey, and one of the marble shop owners, Luis Rodriguez.

A number of residents from the immediate area (within 200 feet of 210 Ogden) were in attendance. Questions and concerns were again raised regarding the levels of noise, vehicular traffic and pollution that would be generated by an installation of this type. Strong concerns were also voiced regarding the appropriateness of locating a commercial operation in a residential neighborhood as well as the long term effect such a use would have on the area.

(The proposed use would require a variance from the City's Board of Adjustment in order to be legal. At this time, the RNA has been told that the required paperwork has been filed by the applicants and a date for the public hearing is yet to be scheduled. Those supporting or opposing the proposal would have the opportunity to be heard at this yet-to-be-scheduled hearing before the Board of Adjustments.)

At the close of the discussion, Mr. Rodriguez requested that those neighbors in attendance indicate whether or not they would be in support of such a use for this property. The predominant position voiced by the neighbors present was of firm opposition to the proposal.

To date, no official vote has been taken by RNA regarding this issue. An official vote will be taken at the October 12th meeting. This proposal is one of extreme importance to all residents in the Riverview neighborhood. The decision by the Board of Adjustments to grant or refuse a variance for this use may have widespread and long-term effects on the neighborhood. The RNA Planning and Development Committee urges all residents and property owners to take the time to consider the issues and to become involved in the determination of the outcome of this important matter.

Hank Cesari

Update: Riverview Park Rehabilitation Proposal

The proposed plan for the renovation of Riverview Park was discussed briefly at the RNA's regular meeting on August 14th. A special meeting was held on August 28th specifically to discuss and vote on the major components of the proposal. Due to the extensive nature of these discussions and the fact that the RNA's official position on these matters had been determined by vote (see last month's newsletter) further debate was declined by those in attendance.

The RNA continues to discuss various details regarding the preservation of certain trees in the Park. A number of solutions have been offered by various experts and are under consideration. Also, the RNA continues to request that rehabilitative measures be considered by the City for the eastern portion of the Park (bandstand area). An official response by City officials has not been received to date on this matter.

An official hearing date for the Park proposal has been scheduled for October 2nd, 5 p.m., at City Hall. The Planning Board will hear the City's proposal at that time. RNA will be submitting their official position, however, any residents or property owners in the area have the opportunity to appear at the meeting and express their viewpoint.

The RNA Planning and Development Committee is in the process of contacting the City's Bureau of Architecture to see if they are interested in discussing the results of the RNA vote on the Park proposal prior to the Planning Board hearing. The outcome of this and the results of the Board meeting will be discussed at our regular meeting on Friday, October 12th.

A WORD ON RIVERVIEW PARK

In the last few months a lot has been spoken and written about the City's renovation plans for our beloved Rivervew Park. Some people are excited about the long over due plans to fix up and restore the Park. Some people are basically satisfied with the Park the way it is and are afraid that the City will change the essence of the open green space. Some people are angry that, after the City comes in to do the job , it will fail in its attempts to adequately maintain or patrol the Park and it will

eventually look the same as before the renovation. Some people are concerned that the City is not being sensitive to the Park environment and that there could be senseless destruction of the trees in it.

All of these people have very strong feelings about this Park. All these people have a right to their opinions and hopefully will voice them, as they have at the RNA meetings, at the Planning Board session to discuss the plans in public.

But even more important is the fact that all these people are mutually concerned about this symbol of our neighborhood: an natural oasis of open green space with a breathtaking view of the Hudson River and the New York City skyline. The Park has definitely seen better days and hopefully whatever form the final renovation takes, it will restore the beauty and majesty to our Park. Then it is necessary for these same people to continue their enthusiasm for the Park. The park needs these people to care for it and protect it. And this can only be accomplished with dediction and committment.

(The following is a reprint of a citizen's letter conerning another park in Jersey City . It was in the Jersey Journal of September 11th.)

I was very happy to read (Jersey Journal, Aug. 22) of the reopening of Audubon Park. I share in the writer's hopes that the park is maintained in a condition which will be acceptable to the neighbors.

I am somewhat upset, however, by the attitudes of some of those who were interviewed. Those to whom I refer seem to think that it is the city's continuing obligation to see that the park is maintained at an acceptable level. Is this the obligation of the city or of the users of that facility?

Having just returned from an extensive holiday through a number of cities in Europe and walking through parks hundreds of years old, viewing and cooling in functioning fountains that are equally as old, walking along unlittered sidewalks and streets, I find it intolerable that we cannot share in improving our living conditions so that we have at least parks that are friendly to our citizenry.

The obligation is not the city's alone. Those who use the facility should take pride in this new and expensive piece of reality in a city that is very short on usable parkland.

People who do not use the park do not destroy it. People who use the park can stop its destruction. It is unfortunate that some think the posting of a policeman is necessary to maintain something that pride alone should be able to protect.

Let's all have the pride necessary to protect this investment so that not only we, but our children and their children can enjoy a piece of greenery.

There need not be broken bottles, litter or anything else adverse to a resident of this city seeking a few minutes, or hours, of respite in our new Audubon Park.

Philip Feintuch

Update: Reopening Mountain Road

(Last month RNA began the process of getting the City to consider reopening Mountain Road. Letters were sent to the Mayor's office, the Dept. of Engineering and the Div. of Traffic Engineering. Since that time, the Mayor's office has told RNA that the Engineering Dept. has already looked at the road and is putting together a proposal. The Incinerator Authority has made a committment to clean up the entire road of all overgrown vegetation and dumping. The Mayor's office has placed a request to PSEG to have the street lights repaired and to the Police Dept. to begin motorcycle patrols on the closed road. Unfortunately, the bottom line is that at this time there is no money for any extensive renovation of the road. RNA's reccommendation is that money be allocated in next year's budget for this project but in the meantime, the above plans be carried out to begin the process. The following is an August 21st memo from the Director of Traffic Engineering in response to our letter.)

To: Gerald Nissen, Municipal Engineer

From: Patrick Nelan, City Traffic Engineer

Attached, please find a copy of a letter from the Riverview Neighborhood Association requesting that Mountain Road be reopened to traffic. They also wish to explore the feasibility of opening Holland Street to traffic.

This office is in agreement with the community that both streets should be reopened, preferably as "ONE WAY" roadways. Moreover, the time limit on the State's authorization to close said roadways, has expired.

In light of the above, the City must reopen Mountain Road and Holland Street, or pursue an additional authorization from the State to keep said roads closed.

SAVING THE APPLE TREE HOUSE

The Jersey City Historical & Preservation Association has been leading the effort to convince local political leaders to find a way to preserve the historic Van Wagenen - or Apple Tree - House at Bergen Square. The house, one of the three oldest in Hudson County, is the last Dutch homestead at Bergen Square -- site of the first permanent settlement in New Jersey, founded in 1660 --, and is one of the last surviving links to our area's Revolutionary history -- Generals Washington and Lafayette met there in 1780. The house has been boarded-up and for sale since the Spring of 1990.

We are pleased to announce that Hudson County Executive Robert Janiszewski has decided to file for State funds available under the Green Acres program for the acquisition of the Van Wagenen House. The County Executive intends to establish the Hudson County Historical Museum in the house. Civic activism

does work!

JCHPA urges RNA members to write to the County Executive, 595 Newark Avenue, 07306, to express thanks and support for his plan to preserve the Van Wagenen House. JCHPA had been collecting a petition asking that the house be saved, we will continue to collect signatures as a "thank-you" to the County Executive. The petition is available at Ted Conrad's house.

RNA members should be aware that Green Acres funds are also available for the acquisition of the historic Van Vorst House on Palisade Avenue. The State has indicated a willingness, indeed even a desire, to help preserve this house in addition to the Van Wagenen House.

The Van Vorst House, located just north of Bowers Street, is another of the three oldest houses in the county. Tradition says that troops on their way to the Battle of Paulus Hook stopped there. RNA members should write to Mayor Gerald McCann and the City Council urging that Jersey City take advantage of available State funding for the acquisition of the Van Vorst House.

JCHPA, in conjunction with the Hudson County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, will present "The Legend of Effie Van Hoffen" -- an original ghost story of All Hallow's Eve in Old Bergen Village on Sunday, October 28th, at 5.p.m. The audience will meet in the lobby of the Provident Savings Bank's headquarters, 830 Bergen Ave. The live show will be presented in a nearby historic Dutch cemetery! Following will be a showing of vintage horror movies. This night of Historic Horror is free. In addition to being just plain fun, the evening will help increase awareness of Jersey City's often forgotten Dutch heritage. For further information, call 915-1212 or 866-0022.

Colin Egan

CONRAD'S CORNER

A recent symposium outlining transportation proposals for the Metropolitan area and northern New Jersey at Steven's turned out to be just another light rail enthusiasts dream for the Waterfront, presented by a professional salesman with the same slides shown over and over again of ideal light rail trolleys breezing their way thru suburbia.

Digging up the streets and laying track and then repaving them was glossed over as an easy job. The overhead wiring, it seemed, was just a simple matter of poles every 150 feet. All this work would take about five years before the trolleys could run and most likely cost an astronomical sum of money.

But waiting five years is much too long. By that time, there may no longer be a need for more mass transit if the decline of the Northeast continues and with a shortage of oil on the horizon, in five years gridlock may become a thing of the past. The NJ Transit's public scoping process to expand the list of transportation alternatives may have been just another waste of time for everyone attending the lengthy meetings.

As transit commissioner for Hudson County, I had suggested numerous proposals of using existing tracks for a north-south transit system for Hudson County only to find the tracks removed after a short time so that the system could not be built. Instead of the 2 1/2 billion dollar plan for a circle of mobility which will never be built, I suggested using the existing push-pull trains from the Hoboken terminal to a station in the Meadowlands Sports Complex parking lot. The train makes it in seven minutes flat, all it needs is a station which should not take longer than a year to build.

A bus line from the Hoboken terminal could first be run along Sinatra Drive to Weehawken in about five minutes. Trolley buses could replace diesel buses later, if the operation of the line is successful. A similar line could run from the Hoboken Terminal to Newport, Exchange Place, and Liberty Park. It would be in operation in half a year, instead of five which may be too late to save the waterfront.

We had enough citizen input to build a transit system across the country. How about getting a few engineers who know railroading to get this thing done without wasting any more time? Why talk about building a non-polluting rail system, when we already have the Hoboken terminal to the Meadowlands? With the pending shortage of oil, it may be the only means of getting to the Meadowlands without a car or bus.

When Conrail vacates their line along the Palisades, we may be able to run a north-south transit system to Bayonne and across the Bayonne bridge which has outriggers in place for tracks to Staten Island.

Let's opt now for the least expensive plan I proposed and at least get something done.

COMMUNITY UPDATES:

1) TEEN NATION: On September 6, the Broad of Adjustment, under Superior Court orders, again took up the issue of the proposed "teen disco" to be located on Hoboken Avenue in the old Wilson Carpet warehouse. They reconfirmed their previous decisions that:

a) the project would need to go before the Planning Board for site plan approval and

b) they considered the "disco" a recreation center and therefore a permitted use in the local zoned area.

Recently, Councilman Rakowksi stated that this project would need a special state approval for its sewer lines because of it sprinkler system and the proposed food service operations. As we go to printing, the "disco" has still not opened.

2) HOBOKEN GASIFIER: On September 20, the Tri-City Sewerage Authority was forced, by order of another Superior Court, to give its final authorization for the construction of the controversial sludge incinerator-

gasifier, to be located in Hoboken. Although this was the final step needed to begin construction, officials of the Tri-City Authority have pledged they will not stop their ongoing legal fight against this facility. They say the gasifier would be too costly, unreliable and damaging to the local environment. The alternative proposal that is being is considered is the recycling of the sludge into pellets, which could be marketed as fertilizer.

ATLANTIC CITY TRIP

RNA has scheduled a bus trip to the Showboat Casino in Atlantic City for Sunday, November 4th.

The bus will leave at 8:30 a.m. from Palisade Avenue and Ferry Street (near A & P). The cost per person is $10. Package includes $7 in quarters and a $3 food voucher.

Please reserve your seats as soon as possible. Money is due by Friday, October 26th, and is non-refundable. Send check made payable to RNA, to 232 Ogden Avenue, Jersey City, N.J. 07307 or bring money in person to the October 12th meeting at Harborview. For further information and to make reservations, call 659-2245.

HOLIDAY GOOD NEIGHBOR DRIVE

This year, as we have done for the past four years, RNA would like to help those less fortunate people of our City. We will be accepting donations of non-perishable food items and toys at the October and November meetings.

The Salvation Army, which is the recipient of the items collected, will pick them up in early December for distribution. Please be as generous as you can.

Both drives will start in October and will continue through the first week of December: we're asking that you donate food at the October 12th meeting and toys at the November 9th meeting. Items can also be left at the home of the Fund Drive Chairperson, Maria Tuzzo, and cash donations will be accepted and used as donor designates. For further information, call 659-2245.

Maria Tuzzo

Leaf Collection

Leaves may be put out for collection starting in September thru December. Collection dates will be announced in local papers. A reminder - leaves may not be put in plastic bags. Place the leaves in seperate receptacles or brown bags. The Jersey City Incinerator Authority will gladly provide free biodegradable brown bags for you to use for leaves. These bags will be available at their offices at 501 route 440, Jersey City, 07305. for further information, call 432-4645.

HELP SUPPORT RNA

RNA's annual membership fee is three dollars ($3.00). Official membership entitles people living within RNA's boundaries - voting privileges on all matters that are brought before the association at the monthly general meetings(the boundaries are Bowers Street on the north, Palisade Avenue on the west, Ogden Avenue on the east and Cuneo Place on the south).For people living outside the area, membership dues entitle them to receive the RNA monthly newsletter and attend the monthly meetings as active non-voting participants. In general, monies collected from the dues help defray the cost of mailing our monthly newsletter, pay for refreshments, stamps for correspondence and other expenses incurred in running our Association.

Make your check payable to the Riverview Neighborhood Association and mail it to RNA, 232 Ogden Ave, Jersey City, New Jersey 07307. Be sure to include your return address so that your membership card can be sent to you.

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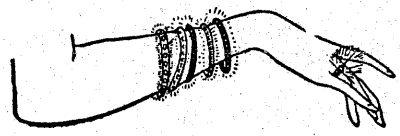

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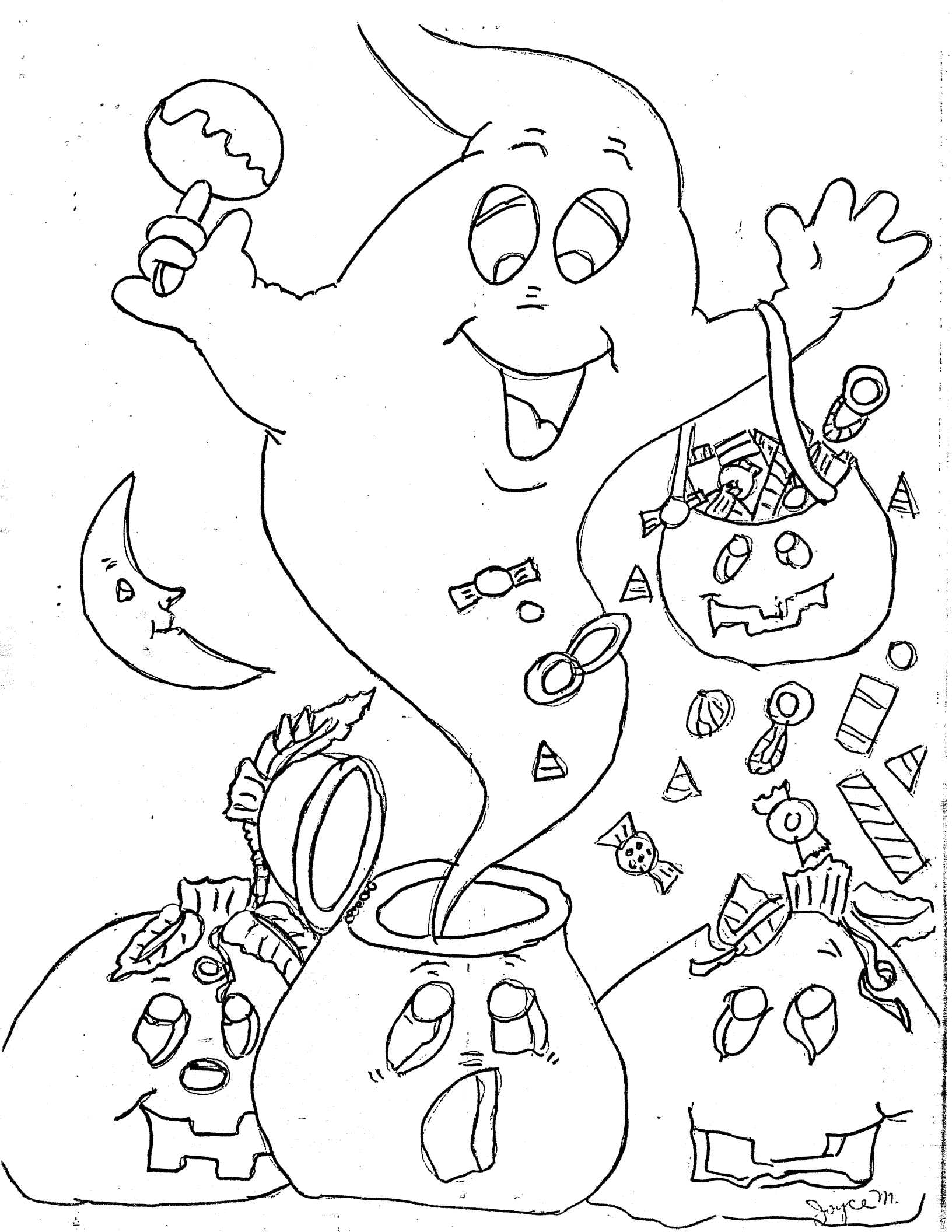
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SPECIAL HALLOWEEN SHOW

The Jersey City Historic And Preservation Association, in conjunction with The Hudson County Office Of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, will present an Evening Of "Scary" Entertainment on Sunday, October 28th, starting At 5:00 pm. An Original Ghost Story, "The Legend Of Effie Van Hoffen" will be presented in a Historic Dutch Cemetary. Following will be a showing Of Vintage Horror Movies. This Night Of Historic Horror is Free. In addition to being just plain fun, the evening will help increase awareness of Jersey City's often forgotten Dutch Heritage. The audience will meet in the lobby of the Provident Savings Bank's Headquarters, 830 Bergen Ave. For further information, call 915-1212 or 866-0022.